

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 490

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, NP, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH PRESIDENT CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL VISIT
TO NEPAL

REF: A) KATHMANDU 5344

1. BANGLADESH PRESIDENT SIAUR RAHMAND DEPARTED KATHMANDU
DECEMBER 19 ON CONCLUSION OF TWO-DAY VISIT. HIGHLIGHTS
OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE WERE REFERENCES TO NEPAL AS ZONE OF
PEACE, ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION, AND
DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL WATERS DEVELOPMENT. RE KING'S CON-
CEPT OF DECLARING NEPAL A ZONE OF PEACE, COMMUNIQUE STATES
GEN. ZIA "WELCOMED" CONCEPT AS "LAUDABLE MOVE TOWARDS
PEACE AND STABILITY IN REGION". JOINT COMMISSION IS TO BE
ESTABLISHED WITH AIM OF PROMOTING COOPERATION BETWEEN
TWO COUNTRIES. PROPOSAL FOLLOWS ON DISCUSSION IN COMMUNIQUE
OF ALREADY GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS AND SHARED VIEWS ON
NUMBER OF ISSUES. FINALLY ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF WATERS, ZIA WELCOMED KING BIRENDA'S INITIATIVE
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(REF A) AND BOTH LEADERS AGREED SUCH DEVELOPMENT
COULD RESULT IN MUTUAL BENEFIT FOR ALL STATES IN
AREA.

2. COMMUNIQUE ALSO HAS SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS ON INTER-
NATIONAL ISSUES -- RESOLUTION OF MID EAST AND SOUTHERN
AFRICAN ISSUES WITHIN US GUIDELINES; CLOSING THE GAP

BETWEEN RICH AND POOR THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW ECONOMIC ORDER; AND SUPPORT OF UN RESOLUTION ON INDIAN OCEAN AS ZONE OF PEACE. COMMUNIQUE CLOSED WITH AGREEMENT THAT KING BIRENDRA WOULD VISIT BANGLADESH; FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES TELL US THIS WILL OCCUR IN JANUARY.

3. IN GENERAL, VISIT APPEARS HAVE GONE VERY WELL, ZIA, AS HEAD OF STATE, WAS GREETED AND SEEN OFF BY KING AND STAYED AT ROYAL PALACE. AS WITH VISIT OF INDIAN PRIME MINISTER WEEK BEFORE, THERE WAS STATE DINNER AND PUBLIC RECEPTION HOSTED BY TOWN PANCHAYAT. PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON BOTH SIDES STRESSED COMMON NATURE OF PROBLEMER FACED BY BOTH COUNTRIES IN SEEKING TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHLIGHTED EXISTING COOPERATION, WHILE CALLING FOR COOPERATION THEREOF. ZIA HAD MEETINGS WITH BOTH KING AND PRIME MINISTER. ACCORDING TO PRESS, IN ADDITION TO POINTS SUBSEQUENTLY CITED SPECIFICALLY IN COMMUNIQUE, ISSUE OF TRADE AND TRANSIT THROUGH BANGLADESH WAS PROMINENT AMONG SUBJECTS DISCUSSED. BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY ZIA APPEARS TO HAVE ADDED LITTLE TO POINTS MADE ELSEWHERE.

4. COMMENT: LIKE VISIT OF DESAIR WEEK BEFORE, ZIA'S STAY WAS CHARACTERIZED MORE BY ATMOSPHERICS THAN SUBSTANCE. SHARED VIEWS ON NEPAL AS ZONE OF PEACE AND ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF WATERS SOUND IMPRESSIVE, BUT LACKING INDIAN BACKING WILL MEAN LITTLE. LIKELIHOOD OF JOINT COMMISSION SUCCEEDING ON BUILDING MAJOR ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES IS SLIM. MFA SOURCE INDICATED BDG MIGHT WISH ADD RAILWAY SLEEPERS AND ROCK TO RICE CURRENTLY BEING IMPORTED FROM NEPAL, AND LATTER MAY TAKE GREATER ADVANTAGE OF TRADE/TRANSIT RIGHTS THROUGH BANIWADESH. BUT FOCUS OF BOTH ECONOMICS IS ELSEWHERE AND SEEMS DESTINED TO REMAIN SO. IN SHORT, IT IS COMMON PREOCCUPATION WITH INDIA WHICH IS LIKELY REMAIN MAJOR LINK BETWEEN NEPAL AND BANGLADESH.
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